

# HOUSE BILL REPORT

## SSB 5551

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**As Reported by House Committee On:**  
Education

**Title:** An act relating to recess periods for elementary school students.

**Brief Description:** Regarding recess periods for elementary school students.

**Sponsors:** Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Keiser, Kastama, Marr, Murray, McDermott, Shin, McAuliffe, Fairley, Kline, Pridemore, Oemig, Regala, Kauffman and Kohl-Welles).

**Brief History:**

**Committee Activity:**

Education: 3/13/09, 3/24/09 [DP].

**Brief Summary of Substitute Bill**

- Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction to collaborate with the statewide parent-teacher organization to conduct and report the results of a survey regarding recess.

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### HOUSE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

**Majority Report:** Do pass. Signed by 12 members: Representatives Quall, Chair; Probst, Vice Chair; Priest, Ranking Minority Member; Hope, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Cox, Dammeier, Hunt, Johnson, Maxwell, Orwall, Santos and Sullivan.

**Staff:** Cece Clynch (786-7195)

**Background:**

School districts are required to provide a certain number of instructional hours. The instructional hours must cover the essential academic learning requirements and other subjects and activities that a school district deems appropriate for the education of the students. Instructional hours may include recess; however, school districts are not specifically required to provide a recess.

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*This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.*

The duties of the Superintendent of Public Instruction include promoting the adoption of school-based curricula and policies that provide quality, daily physical education for all students, and to encourage policies that provide all students with opportunities for physical activity outside of formal classes. Currently, students in elementary and middle school must receive an average of 100 instructional minutes of physical education per week. Two of the 19 credits required for graduation from high school are health and fitness credits. Additionally, the Legislature has set forth goals for school districts to provide at least 150 minutes per week of quality physical education in grades 1 through 8 by 2010.

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**Summary of Bill:**

By December 1, 2009, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, with the statewide parent-teacher organization, must conduct and report the results of a survey of elementary schools regarding the availability and perceptions of the importance of recess. The survey must include specific questions provided but the survey is not limited to the provided questions.

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**Appropriation:** None.

**Fiscal Note:** Not requested.

**Effective Date:** The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of the session in which the bill is passed.

**Staff Summary of Public Testimony:**

(In support) The Parent Teacher Association already has the tools to implement this bill and there will be no cost to the state. Recess is an unscheduled, unstructured time which allows students an opportunity to release energy and communicate with friends. This time on the playground allows them time to grow socially as well as problem-solve. It also provides teachers with a needed break. School District #10 has implemented a recess policy and it is going well. New studies have shown that recess contributes positively to academics. Students with attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder show dramatic improvement from unstructured time, sometimes to the point of no longer needing medication. It is important for Washington to conduct this survey to determine whether there is a problem due to a lack of recess time. Human beings have short attention spans and need to take breaks.

(Opposed) None.

**Persons Testifying:** (In support) Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; and Ian King.

**Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying:** None.